

## TYPES OF TRADITIONAL LITERATURE

**Traditional Literature:** Literature that has been passed down over time in the oral tradition, with some additional literature written and published in later times.

Type	Definition	Characteristics
<b>Folktales</b> (including modern rewritings)	<p>An imagined story that features characters and events that could not exist in the real world. Narrative structure, written or oral, handed down over many years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beast tales</li> <li>• Cumulative tales</li> <li>• Pourquoi tales</li> <li>• Trickster tales</li> <li>• Noodlehead tales (fool tales)</li> <li>• Realistic tales</li> <li>• Tall tales</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Animals that talk</li> <li>• Imagined story that features characters and events that could not exist in the real world</li> <li>• Narrative structure, written or oral, handed down over many years</li> <li>• Simple, easy-to-follow plot</li> <li>• Triumph of good over evil</li> <li>• Goodness rewarded and evil punished</li> <li>• Characters who are flat and do not develop</li> <li>• Time, place, and characters and conflict established quickly</li> <li>• Brief conclusion</li> <li>• Repetition (of words, numbers, verses, responses, chants, and poems)</li> <li>• Recurring motifs (magical powers, transformations, magical objects, wishes, trickery)</li> <li>• Culture and values of the place of origin reflected</li> </ul> <p>Often:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Original source of the tale referenced</li> <li>• Proverbs from the place of origin</li> <li>• Recognizable literary patterns (cumulative tales, pourquoi tales, beast tales, realistic tales)</li> <li>• Figurative language and imagery</li> <li>• Simplistic characters who are completely evil or completely good</li> <li>• Small and powerless characters who triumph</li> <li>• Happy ending</li> </ul>
<b>Fairy Tales</b>	<p>A type of folktale that emphasizes magic and the supernatural.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Imagined story that features characters and events that could not exist in the real world</li> <li>• Narrative structure, written or oral, handed down over many years</li> <li>• Simple, easy-to-follow plot</li> <li>• Triumph of good over evil</li> <li>• Goodness rewarded and evil punished</li> </ul>

**Figure 8.3** Types of traditional literature

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<b>Fairy Tales</b> (cont.)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Characters who are flat and do not develop</li> <li>• Time, place, and characters and conflict established quickly</li> <li>• Brief conclusion</li> <li>• Repetition (of words, numbers, verses, responses, chants, and poems)</li> <li>• Recurring motifs (magical powers, transformations, magical objects, wishes, trickery)</li> <li>• Magic and the supernatural (wicked witches, demons, monsters, dragons)</li> <li>• Culture and values of the place of origin reflected</li> </ul> <p>Often:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Original source of the tale referenced</li> <li>• Figurative language and imagery</li> <li>• Simplistic characters who are completely evil or completely good</li> <li>• Small and powerless characters who triumph</li> <li>• Romance and adventure</li> <li>• Happy ending</li> </ul>
<b>Fables</b>	An imagined story that features characters and events that could not exist in the real world. Brief and moralistic and primarily meant to instruct.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Imagined story that features characters and events that could not exist in the real world</li> <li>• Narrative structure, written or oral, handed down over many years</li> <li>• Brief and moralistic (implicit or explicit moral)</li> <li>• Primarily meant to instruct</li> <li>• Animals who speak as humans</li> <li>• Flat, impersonal characters who represent aspects of human nature</li> </ul> <p>Often:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No more than three characters</li> <li>• Plot based on a single incident</li> <li>• Associated with Aesop</li> </ul>

**Figure 8.3** Types of traditional literature (cont.)

*continues*

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Type	Definition	Characteristics
<b>Legends, Epics, Ballads</b>	An imagined story that features characters and events that could not exist in the real world. Long narrative or cycle of stories that revolves around the actions of a single hero.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Imagined story that features characters and events that could not exist in the real world</li> <li>• Narrative structure, written or oral, handed down over many years</li> <li>• Connected with myths</li> <li>• A long narrative or cycle of stories that revolves around the actions of a single hero</li> <li>• Gods and human heroes</li> <li>• Heroes who embody the ideal characteristics of greatness of the time</li> <li>• Moral values of society expressed</li> </ul> <p>Often:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A quest</li> <li>• Otherworldly creatures</li> <li>• Written as poetry or in a poetic way</li> </ul>
<b>Myths</b>	An imagined story that features characters and events that could not exist in the real world. Seeks to explain the beginnings of the world, nature, natural phenomena, or human behavior.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Imagined story that features characters and events that could not exist in the real world</li> <li>• Narrative structure, written or oral, handed down over many years</li> <li>• Explanation of the beginnings of the world, nature, natural phenomena, or human behavior</li> <li>• Characterized by type of explanation offered (creation myths, nature myths, hero myths)</li> <li>• Gods and goddesses that take the form of men and women</li> <li>• Gods and goddesses that are immortal and possess supernatural powers</li> <li>• Gods and goddesses that represent virtues</li> </ul> <p>Often:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationships among the gods, and between humans and gods</li> <li>• Difficult tasks or obstacles for hero or heroine to overcome</li> <li>• Otherworldly creatures</li> </ul>

**Figure 8.3** Types of traditional literature (*cont.*)